

(MARIAN)

YOU HAVE A BAD HABIT
OF CHANGING EV'RY SUBJECT -

MRS. PAROO

NOW I HAVEN'T CHANGED THE SUBJECT.
I WAS TALKIN' ABOUT THAT STRANGER -

MARIAN

WHAT STRANGER?

MRS. PAROO

WITH THE SUITCASE,
WHO MAY BE YOUR VERY LAST CHANCE!

MARIAN

MAMA!
DO YOU THINK THAT I'D ALLOW A COMMON MASHER?
NOW REALLY, MAMA!
I HAVE MY STANDARDS WHERE MEN ARE CONCERNED,
AND I HAVE NO INTENTION -

MRS. PAROO

I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR STANDARDS,
AND IF YOU DON'T MIND MY SAYIN' SO,
THERE'S NOT A MAN ALIVE
WHO COULD HOPE TO MEASURE UP
TO THAT BLEND A' PAUL BUNYAN,
SAINT PAT AND NOAH WEBSTER
YOU'VE CONCOCTED FOR YOURSELF
OUT A' YOUR IRISH IMAGINATION,
YOUR IOWA STUBBORNNESS,
AND YOUR LIBERRY FULL A' BOOKS!

(Fine chord from AMARYLLIS)

MARIAN

(Hands on hips, gets slightly Irish in her exasperation)

Well, if that isn't the best I've ever heard!

AMARYLLIS

Thank you. Can I have a drink, please?

MARIAN

May I have a —

AMARYLLIS

May I have a drink, please?

MARIAN

Yes, dear.

(As AMARYLLIS starts to the sink, a nine-year old BOY with a set, sullen face ENTERS without a word, heading for bedroom door UPSTAGE)

MRS. PAROO

Winthrop. It's after dark.

(WINTHROP halts in his tracks)

Is that a way to walk into the house?

WINTHROP

Hello.

(Tries to EXIT)

MRS. PAROO

That won't do at all. I'll have a kiss from my boy.

(WINTHROP walks to his mother, stands stubbornly in her embrace for a moment, then starts out again)

The lady over there is your sister, young man.

(WINTHROP repeats the uncooperative performance with MARIAN)

AMARYLLIS

Hello, Winthrop.

(WINTHROP stares at the floor)

MRS. PAROO

Winthrop, where's your manners.

AMARYLLIS

I'm having a party on Saturday. Will you please come?

(Silence)

I would especially like it very much if you'd come... Winthrop?

(Silence)

MRS. PAROO

Well, Winthrop, Amaryllis asked you to her party. Are you goin' or aren't you?

WINTHROP

No.

MRS. PAROO

No what?

WINTHROP

No, thank you.

MRS. PAROO

You know the little girl's name.

AMARYLLIS

He won't say Amaryllis because of the "s" because of his lisp. He's ashamed.

MRS. PAROO

We know all about his lisp, Amaryllis. Well, Winthrop.

AMARYLLIS

I'll bet he won't say it.

(Tiptoeing closer to WINTHROP, SHE tries to peer into his face)

WINTHROP

No thank you, Amaryllith.

(AMARYLLIS hops up and down giggling gleefully)

AMARYLLIS

Amaryllith – Amaryllith.

(SHE moves closer to WINTHROP, stoops and looks up into his face as HE continues to stare at his feet. She turns to MRS. PAROO with surprise)

He's crying.

(WINTHROP bolts out of the room. MRS. PAROO follows him)

Why does he get so mad at people – just because he lisps?

MARIAN

It's not only because he lisps. That's just part of it, Amaryllis.

AMARYLLIS

What's the other part?

MARIAN

Never mind, dear. It's just that he never talks very much.

AMARYLLIS

Not even to you and your mother?

MARIAN

No, dear. We all have to be a little patient.

AMARYLLIS

I'm patient. Even though he doesn't ever talk to me — but I do him — every night — I say goodnight to him on the evening star. You have to do it the very second you see it, too, or it doesn't count. "Goodnight, my Winthrop, goodnight. Sleep tight."

(Starts to cry)

MARIAN

There, darling, don't cry, you have lots of time.
If not Winthrop, there'll be someone else.

AMARYLLIS

Never! I'll end up an old maid like you.

(Catches herself)

I'm sorry, Miss Marian. Can I play my cross-hand piece?

MARIAN

May I play my —

AMARYLLIS

May I play my cross-hand piece?

MARIAN

You may.

AMARYLLIS

See, without a sweetheart you have no one to say goodnight to on the evening star.

MARIAN

I know, Amaryllis. For the time being just say goodnight my — someone. You can put the name in when the right someone comes along.

AMARYLLIS

All right. It's better than nothing.